

Strachan Memo Indicates Mitchell Had a Key

DATA ON CAMPAIGN GIVEN HALDEMAN

Attorney General and Chief of Staff Contradicted in House Panel Evidence

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WASHINGTON, July 16 — John N. Mitchell, while Attorney General, apparently decided whether to accept contributions to President Nixon's re-election campaign from ambassadorial hopefuls, according to a confidential White House memorandum.

The document is one of several memos written to H.R. Haldeman in late 1971 and early 1972 that contradict testimony by Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Haldeman, then the White House chief of staff, that they did not play an active part in Mr. Nixon's re-election effort while on the Government payroll.

The memorandum referring to Mr. Mitchell's decision-making role in connection with ambassadorships, included in evidence made public today by the House Judiciary Committee, was submitted to Mr. Haldeman on Dec. 2, 1971, by Gordon C. Strachan, an aide to Mr. Haldeman.

Like the others made public last week by the committee, which is considering President Nixon's impeachment, the Strachan-to-Haldeman memo, marked "administratively confidential," demonstrates that Mr. Haldeman was kept closely advised of the inner workings of the Nixon campaign organization.

Mitchell in U.S. Role

Mr. Mitchell did not leave the Justice Department to take over the Committee for the Re-Election of the President until March 1, 1972, three months after the date on the memo mentioning his role in approving campaign contributions.

"Concerning ambassadorships," Mr. Strachan wrote, "Kalmbach will get a case-by-case determination from the Attorney General as he did in the case of John Safer."

Mr. Safer, a Washington, D.C., real estate developer who is also a sculptor, was originally solicited for a contribution to the Nixon campaign by Robert Gray, a re-election committee fund-raiser, according to the report of the Senate Watergate committee.

Mr. Safer responded with a \$250,000 donation, the report said, and told Mr. Gray "that he wanted to be considered for an ambassadorship."

Mr. Gray reportedly cautioned Mr. Safer that he could only insure that his name was included among those of other aspiring ambassadors whose qualifications would be evaluated.

Mr. Safer has not been nominated for an ambassadorship by the President.

"Apparently," the report continued, "Safer was also referred to Herbert Kalmbach, who reiterated that his interest in an ambassadorship would be forwarded to the proper persons but that no quid pro quo could follow from the contribution."

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Ambassadorship Donations

Judging from the Strachan memo, one of the "proper persons" was Mr. Mitchell.

Mr. Kalmbach pleaded guilty last February to Federal charges, brought by the special Watergate prosecutor, of promising a more prestigious diplomatic post to J. Fife Symington, then the American Ambassador to Trinidad and Tobago, in return for a \$100,000 contribution to be split between Senate Republican candidates in 1970 and Mr. Nixon in 1972.

Mr. Kalmbach, who served the President both as his personal attorney and as a campaign fund-raiser, told the Watergate committee that he had received approval to make the offer to Mr. Symington from Lawrence M. Higby, another Haldeman aide, who he believed had first checked with Mr. Haldeman himself.

Both Mr. Haldeman and Mr.

Higby declined to testify on their role in the "selling" of ambassadorships under the Nixon Administration, a practice that the President has publicly declared did not exist.

Peter M. Flanigan, a White House assistant to Mr. Nixon who was responsible for filling vacant ambassadorships told the Watergate committee in a letter that Mr. Kalmbach had been "misinformed" about the authorization to make such a commitment to Mr. Symington and that none had ever existed.

But Mr. Kalmbach testified that Mr. Flanigan had been "the only person in the White House to ever question the commitment." According to the Watergate committee report, Mr. Kalmbach recalled that when he raised the matter of the promise to Mr. Symington, Mr. Flanigan told him, "We didn't give him a commitment. We can't do it."

Mr. Kalmbach said he then replied, "I don't care how you slice it, you did, and it came right out of Bob's [Mr. Haldeman's] office. And as far as I'm concerned, it's a matter of honor and we live up to what we say we will do."

But the memo from Mr. Strachan to Mr. Haldeman indicates that consideration was given by Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Mitchell to bypassing Mr. Flanigan's formal responsibility for selecting new Ambassadors.

Immediately after noting that Mr. Kalmbach would receive a "determination" on such contributions from Mr. Mitchell, Mr. Strachan wrote that "Kalmbach has tried to approach Flanigan but continues to have the same problems of having telephone calls returned and reaching an understanding."